

which means more than conforming our policy to the treaty and it means more than joining the treaty. It means actively using our influence to persuade other countries to join. Countries like India and Pakistan, China and Russia, Israel and Egypt today make the excuse that the United States has not joined, so why should they?

One particularly farfetched notion is that giving up landmines while Russia, China and other potential adversaries keep theirs is at odds with our usual arms control strategy, which seeks to use disarmament agreements as a means of enhancing U.S. security. This makes sense in the context of long-range missiles and nuclear bombs, but antipersonnel landmines? We have not used these weapons for 19 years, and no one can credibly argue that they are necessary to protect the national security of the United States or that our security is threatened by China's and Russia's antipersonnel landmines which are deployed along their common border.

Today, the United States is the largest contributor to humanitarian demining, a fact I am proud of, and I have been asked if by joining the treaty we would feel less obligated to support it. This question is nonsensical to me. Speaking as the chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that funds these programs, whether or not we are a party to the treaty has nothing to do with our interest and responsibility in helping get rid of the millions of mines and other unexploded ordnance that litter and plague dozens of countries, including allies like Jordan, Afghanistan and Vietnam whose citizens continue to lose their lives and limbs from these hidden killers. Some of those mines and bombs were manufactured here and left behind by U.S. forces decades ago.

Some might ask why bother developing a plan to join the treaty, since the fact that 68 Senators signed a letter supporting it does not guarantee that two-thirds of the Senate will vote to ratify it. It is true that no one can guarantee what the U.S. Senate will do about treaties or anything else. But that is hardly a reason not to join. The fact that more than two-thirds of the Senate today supports such a policy, including 10 Republicans and 2 Independents, should certainly give momentum to doing so, and convey to the President that the treaty would find wide acceptance in the Senate.

Finally, I have heard it suggested that U.S. troops might need antipersonnel mines in Afghanistan. I find it hard to imagine that the United States, which has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to get rid of mines left over from past wars in Afghanistan that have killed and injured more civilians than in any other country, at a time when our military leaders are trying to minimize civilian casualties which have caused so many Afghans to turn against us, would use antipersonnel landmines in Afghanistan—a

party to the treaty—and risk the public outcry that would result.

We could debate whether the United States should have joined the Ottawa Convention 13 years ago, but there is no point in that. The question today is why not now? Many years have passed and we have seen the benefits of the treaty. The number of antipersonnel mines produced and exported has plummeted, as has the number of victims.

But landmines remain a deadly legacy in many countries, and the world needs the leadership of the United States to help universalize the treaty and put an end to the time when antipersonnel landmines were an acceptable weapon. It will not happen overnight, but it will never happen without U.S. support. As President Obama said in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't." We are fortunate to have a President, and top leaders at the Pentagon and commanders on the battlefield, who recognize that civilians far too often bear the brunt of war's misery, and who believe that we can and must do more to prevent it. There is no better way to begin implementing that important principle, and working toward that goal, than by joining the Ottawa Treaty.

The United States is by far the world's strongest military power. We also have the moral authority that no other country has and the obligation to use that authority in ways that set an example for the rest of the world. It was 16 years ago that President Clinton embraced the goal of ridding the world of these indiscriminate weapons. The Obama administration's review of U.S. policy can finally turn that goal into reality.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the letter sent to President Obama be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, May 18, 2010.

HON. BARACK OBAMA,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, we are writing to convey our strong support for the Administration's decision to conduct a comprehensive review of United States policy on landmines. The Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held last December in Cartagena, Colombia, makes this review particularly timely. It is also consistent with your commitment to reaffirm U.S. leadership in solving global problems and with your remarks in Oslo when you accepted the Nobel Peace Prize: "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't."

These indiscriminate weapons are triggered by the victim, and even those that are designed to self-destruct after a period of time (so-called "smart" mines) pose a risk of

being triggered by U.S. forces or civilians, such as a farmer working in the fields or a young child. It is our understanding that the United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992, has not produced anti-personnel mines since 1997, and has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991. We are also proud that the United States is the world's largest contributor to humanitarian demining and rehabilitation programs for landmine survivors.

In the ten years since the Convention came into force, 158 nations have signed including the United Kingdom and other ISAF partners, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan which, like Colombia, are parties to the Convention and have suffered thousands of mine casualties. The Convention has led to a dramatic decline in the use, production, and export of anti-personnel mines.

We note that our NATO allies have addressed their force protection needs in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. We are also mindful that antipersonnel mines pose grave dangers to civilians, and that avoiding civilian casualties and the anger and resentment that result has become a key priority in building public support for our mission in Afghanistan. Finally, we are aware that anti-personnel mines in the Korean DMZ are South Korean mines, and that the U.S. has alternative munitions that are not victim-activated.

We believe the Administration's review should include consultations with the Departments of Defense and State as well as retired senior U.S. military officers and diplomats, allies such as Canada and the United Kingdom that played a key role in the negotiations on the Convention, Members of Congress, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other experts on landmines, humanitarian law and arms control.

We are confident that through a thorough, deliberative review the Administration can identify any obstacles to joining the Convention and develop a plan to overcome them as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Patrick Leahy, George V. Voinovich, Richard G. Lugar, John F. Kerry, Jack Reed, Orrin G. Hatch, Daniel K. Inouye, Carl Levin, Olympia J. Snowe, Charles E. Schumer, Joseph I. Lieberman, Robert F. Bennett, Jeff Bingaman, Dianne Feinstein, Susan M. Collins, Ben Nelson, Max Baucus, Lisa Murkowski, Judd Gregg, Robert Menendez, Arlen Specter, Barbara A. Mikulski, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher J. Dodd, Harry Reid, Sherrod Brown, Benjamin L. Cardin, Kent Conrad, Mike Crapo, Bill Nelson, Richard J. Durbin, Patty Murray, Ron Wyden, Blanche L. Lincoln, Byron Dorgan, Mark Warner, Evan Bayh, George S. LeMieux, Michael F. Bennet, Mary L. Landrieu, Russell D. Feingold, Tim Johnson, Maria Cantwell, Thomas R. Carper, Herb Kohl, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Robert C. Byrd, Frank R. Lautenberg, Jon Tester, John D. Rockefeller IV, Edward E. Kaufman, Daniel K. Akaka, Mark L. Pryor, Kay R. Hagan, Tom Udall, Jeanne Shaheen, Claire McCaskill, Al Franken, Mark Udall, Jeff Merkley, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Mark Begich, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Harkin, Barbara Boxer, Roland W. Burris, Bernard Sanders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 3997 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3739

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business be set aside and my amendment No. 3997 be called up.